

County Trends



Garfield

June 2003

A Local Economic Perspective

Back in the growth mode again

Our last newsletter noted that Garfield County seemed on the verge of a labor market recovery. The current figures certainly bolster that contention.

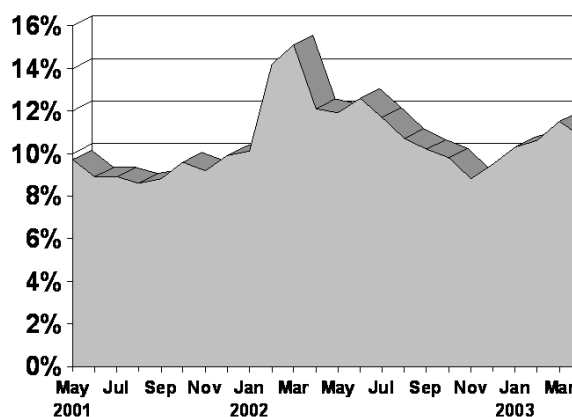
Labor Market Shines

It hasn't been a great couple of years for Garfield County's labor market. When your county's economy is heavily dependent on tourism, events like 9-11 and a faltering national economy can put a blight on travel and therefore, your employment growth.

However after a spate of job losses, Garfield County has once again begun to create employment. In fact by year-end (the most current data available), jobs in Garfield County were up 7.5 percent. That's not bad for an area which earlier in the year was displaying an 11 percent employment decline.

This certainly appears to be a tourism-driven rebound. New jobs in leisure/hospitality services accounted for almost 70 percent of the 125 new jobs created in the county between December 2001 and December 2002. Healthcare, the federal governments and the information industry (which includes telecommunications) also added a noticeable number of new positions.

Seasonally Adjusted Garfield County Unemployment Rates

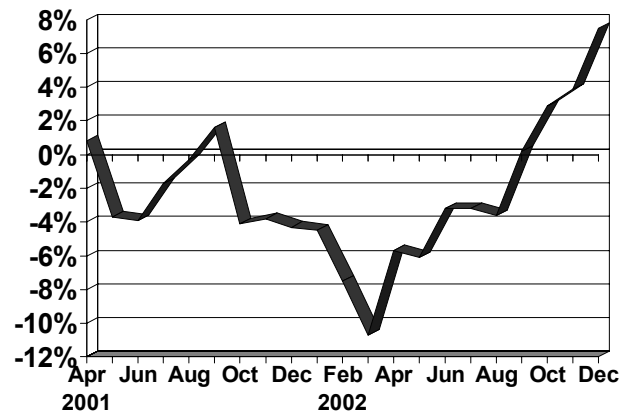


Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services.





Year-Over Change in Garfield County Employment



Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services.

To the Point

Garfield County's economy seems on the road to recovery with its strong recent employment expansion. An increase in gross taxable sales also seems to indicate that tourism is rebounding as more Americans travel within the country's borders.

All wasn't bright in the employment picture, however. Manufacturing, retail trade, and public education all saw their employment levels drop.

Of course, Garfield County's unemployment rate always looks terrible when compared to the state and the nation. In April 2003, county joblessness measured 10.8 percent—twice the level of Utah's unemployment rate.

Employment related to tourism is seasonal in nature. This keeps the county's unemployment rate high, because many people are out of work during the off-season. The nature of the seasonal adjustment process (which we use to spot trends) keeps the rate high all year. The current trend shows rates edging up during the first part of 2003.

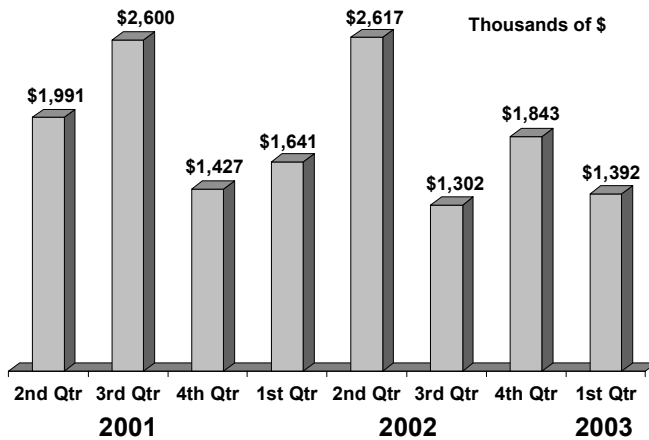
Construction Starts 2003 Slowly

Construction is an erratic economic indicator at best. While fourth quarter 2002 values doubled, the first quarter of 2003 showed a 15-percent decline. Of course, that's not much in the volatile world of construction permitting. But, a gain would have brought more joy.

Both residential and nonresidential authorized values were down when compared with the previous year—even though the number of home permits actually rose. Most of the home-building continues to occur outside the major townships.

Total Garfield County Approved Construction Values

3



Source: Utah Bureau of Economic & Business Research.

Although new construction dropped, additions/alterations/repairs helped out with a decided increase.

Sales Rebound

The good job news is mirrored by expansion in gross taxable sales. The county has spent most of the past two years in a state of sales contraction. But, between the fourth quarters of 2001 and 2002, sales were up by almost 4 percent—just another sign that the economy is rebounding. Sales in both the retail and wholesale trade industries proved particularly strong. Increased tourism seems to have boosted both employment and sales.

Will it Continue?

Will Garfield County be able to maintain the luster of the current economic picture? The national economy has sputtered since the Iraqi war, but more U.S. citizens appear to be traveling within the country's borders. This should help maintain the county's current expansion.

Lecia Parks Langston, Regional Economist
lecialangston@utah.gov, 435-688-3115



Quick Facts

April 2003

Unemployment Rate

Garfield County	10.8%
Utah	5.3%
U.S.	6.0%

Dec 2002 Change from Previous Year

Job Growth

Garfield County	7.5%
Utah	0.2%
U.S.	-0.2%

1st Qtr 2003 Change from Previous Year

Construction Values

Garfield County	-15.2%
-----------------	--------

4th Qtr 2002 Change from Previous Year

Sales

Garfield County	3.8%
-----------------	------

Source: Utah Dept of Workforce Services,
 Bureau of Labor Statistics,
 Utah Tax Commission,
 Bureau of Econ & Business Research.

For more economic information about Garfield County see:
<http://jobs.utah.gov/wi/Regions/County.asp>

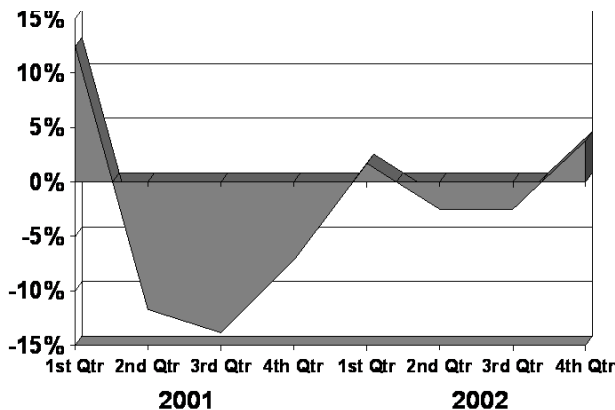
State of Utah

Utah Department of Workforce Services

140 East 300 South
PO Box 45249
Salt Lake City, UT 84145-0249

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Year-Over Change in Garfield County Gross Taxable Sales



Source: Utah Tax Commission.

The mission of the Utah Department of Workforce Services is to provide quality, accessible, and comprehensive employment-related and supportive services responsive to the needs of employers, job seekers, and the community.

What's Up?

- Brothers Stephen, Sheldon, Scott, Shane, and Shannon Steed who recently reopened the Escalante sawmill as Skyline Forest Resources and provided jobs to 52 people who work at the mill, have been honored with the 2003 Small Business Persons of the Year Award from the U.S. Small Business Administration.
- The Utah Permanent Community Impact Board has awarded a \$150,000 grant and a \$335,000 loan to Henrieville for improvements to the community's water system.

For more economic events, see:

<http://jobs.utah.gov/wi/Regions/western/garfield/garfielddee.pdf>



Utah!
Where ideas connect™

03-13WG-0603

Equal Opportunity Employment Program

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Call (801) 526-9240. Individuals with speech and/or hearing impairments may call the state relay at 1-800-346-4128

